

How Stages Correlates with the New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment [NJ-APA] and the Core Curriculum Content Standards for Students with Severe Disabilities [CCCSSSD]

Stages is relevant for a broad spectrum of New Jersey learners with special needs.

- Learners with disabilities who are preparing for the Alternate Proficiency Assessment in grade 4 (or age 10 if learner is non-graded) as well as those preparing for the ESPA with or without accommodations benefit from the powerful data-gathering features of Stages.
- Through Stages, learners gain meaningful and effective access to the general curriculum.
- Stages helps the instructional teams to determine the learning environment most suited toward the learner.

The following sections describe the relevance of Stages to these learner populations in greater detail.

Stages and the New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal benchmark software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances New Jersey's Alternate Proficiency Assessment because:

- 1. Stages correlates with the content of New Jersey CCCSSSD.**
- 2. Stages generates primary evidence for the learner's portfolio.**
- 3. Stages allows the learner to apply self-determination in different settings.**
- 4. Stages assists the learner's IEP and/or instructional teams with selecting assistive technology, adaptations, and modifications.**

1. Stages correlates with the content of New Jersey CCCSSSD.

Learner portfolios must connect with the CCCS and/or CCCSSSD standard and cumulative progress indicators. Stages content ensures "substantial connection" with general education curriculum standards in K-4 mathematics, reading, and writing, as well as functional living skills. Please refer to the next section, "How Stages Correlates with New Jersey Department of Education Core Curriculum Content Standards for Students with Severe Disabilities" for detailed matching between the Stages informal assessment software and specific academic curricula.

2. Stages generates primary evidence for the learner's portfolio.

During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to produce a student work sample. At the end of each activity, a report with data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The teacher can then print that screen or save the information as a text-format electronic file.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session. The data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two teachers can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while the teacher coaches. Over time, the collected data will

provide primary evidence that the learner's IEP team needs to build a complete portfolio of the learner's skill achievement.

3. Stages allows the learner to apply self-determination in different settings.

Many of the activities are accessible using an input device so that the learner can directly select choices for exploration or in response to multiple-choice questions. The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid. The activities depict many realistic scenarios of home, school and community in photographs, videos, and drawings, preparing the learner for demonstrating skills in real-life settings.

4. Stages assists the learner's IEP and/or instructional teams with selecting assistive technology, adaptations, and modifications.

An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's teacher and IEP team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables, and these settings are displayed in all post-activity report screens. The screens may be printed directly for use as teacher data sheets.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the NJ-APA alternative assessment cycle. The Stages software is a comprehensive tool to assist the instructional team in collecting valuable portfolio evidence, determining assessment strategy, and discovering the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with the New Jersey Department of Education Core Curriculum Content Standards for Students with Severe Disabilities

This document lists the Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics portions of the NJ Department of Education Core Curriculum Content Standards for Students with Severe Disabilities, which are a subset of the entire Core Curriculum designed for its student population. Each Standard below is followed by the Stages Assessment Kit activities or areas of focus that are relevant to that Standard. In addition to the Stages Assessment Kit activities, the Stages book also supports many of these Standards through its:

- suggestions of off-computer extension activities
- discussions of assistive technology
- ideas for encouraging peer interaction
- ways to foster communication and literacy

Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics are the main focus of the Stages Assessment Kit activities, although Stages supports these and other areas of the curriculum through third party software.

Language Arts Literacy

Standard 3.1 - All students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences.

Descriptive Statement: The ability to communicate with others is a fundamental life function. Self expression is central to a person's quality of life and essential to learning. There are many ways in which students may express themselves to others, such as through signing, oral expression, gesture, or through the use of augmentative communication. The intent of this standard is to develop students' abilities to use their primary systems of communication to express themselves with others in school, home and in the community to perform a variety of important life functions and to satisfy their emotional and social needs.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Express ideas, needs, wants and feelings using student's primary system of communication such as, sign language, oral language, object symbols, gesture, and/or communication devices.
2. Participate in conversations with peers and adults by alternating roles of speaker and listener.
3. Give directions and/or instructions to others.
4. Adjust expressive communication for different purposes and audiences.
5. Use communication system in school, home, community and work situations.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Two: Emerging Language

Stage Two focuses on different levels of representation, relating a photo, drawing, and symbol to an object or action.

Stage Three: Language Readiness

Stage Three focuses on encouraging the learner to make choices.

Stage Seven: Written Expression

Making Words, Sentences, and Stories: Learners can express ideas, needs, wants and feelings

using an accessible, onscreen keyboard or standard keyboard.

Standard 3.2 - All students will listen actively in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources.

Descriptive Statement: Listening involves sensory and cognitive processes important to all students. The ability to comprehend the communication of others enables students to engage in meaningful social interactions for pleasure and for practical purposes. While some students are able to listen through hearing, other students may learn “to listen” by using other senses such as vision or touch. Students may demonstrate their comprehension through verbal and non-verbal means.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Listen for a variety of purposes such as enjoyment and obtaining information.
2. Demonstrate comprehension of another’s message through appropriate verbal or non-verbal responses.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Two: Emerging Language

Throughout this Stage, learners listen to poems about objects and actions in many categories.

Stage Five: Advanced Concepts and Communication

Problem Solving: Learners listen to clues to solve mysteries and play games.

Stage Seven: Written Expression

Making Words: Learners listen to a story, then fill in the missing words.

Standard 3.3 - All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.

Descriptive Statement: Using graphic symbols (e.g. printed letters, words or numbers, pictures, or Braille) enables students to express ideas, needs, wants and feelings in symbolic form to a variety of audiences. Writing enables students to organize as well as to express their thoughts and information, such as when preparing a shopping list or creating a get well card. Writing may take many forms such as handwriting, typing, drawing a picture, selecting a word or picture from a resource bank or dictating to a scribe.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Express ideas, needs, wants and feelings using graphic symbols (printed word, pictures, Braille, assistive technology).
2. Demonstrate the ability to sequence and organize thoughts and information using graphic symbols for a variety of audiences and situations.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Seven: Written Expression

Making Words: Learners copy a target word, with or without a visual model.

Learners listen to a story, then fill in the missing high-frequency words.

Learners listen to a rhyme, then fill in the missing words.

Making Sentences: Learners create sentences by choosing tiles from a word wall.

	Learners edit sentences for correct spelling and grammar.
	Learners write sentences independently.
Making Stories:	Learners write a story based on a picture.

Standard 3.4 - All students will read a variety of material and texts with comprehension and critical analysis.
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Descriptive Statement: Reading is a complex process through which readers actively interpret and create personal associations with printed material. The graphic materials read by students may be used for a variety of purposes including enjoyment, learning and problem solving and may take many forms including text, pictures, and object symbols. Students benefit from a range of experiences with a variety of materials to enhance development of comprehension skills. For example, students may read a book for enjoyment, read a picture activity schedule to review their daily activities, read a TV listing or they may read labels in the food store.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Use reading for different meaningful purposes such as enjoyment, learning and problem solving. Students may read graphic material (rebus, pictures, text) or objects (e.g., an object schedule).
2. Read or interpret graphic material with comprehension.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Five: Advanced Concepts and Communication

Reading:

Letters: Learners alphabetize words.

Sounds: Learners hear rhymes, then choose words that rhyme from a word wall.

Meaning: Learners identify the picture that matches the displayed word.

Context: Learners choose the word that completes each sentence in a story.

Stage Six: Functional Learning

Stories: Learners read for enjoyment and learning.

Standard 3.5 - All students will view, understand, and use nontextual visual information.
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Descriptive Statement: Viewing involves the ability to respond with comprehension to messages from both print and non-print media. Media might include live performances, print media (photographs, charts, diagrams, illustrations), and electronic media (television, computers, film). Students should have opportunities to experience and learn from a variety of media which provide entertainment and information that can enrich their lives.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Demonstrate the ability to gain information from a variety of media.
2. View various media for a variety of purposes (e.g. enjoyment, information).

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Five: Advanced Concepts and Communication

Math: Charts and Graphs

Learners answer questions by looking at various types of charts.

Stage Six: Functional Learning

Photos and videos tell a story about a daily activity of a boy or girl. Learners then answer questions about the money, clocks, dress, signs, and objects used.

Mathematics

Standard 4.1 -All students will develop the ability to pose and solve mathematical problems in mathematics, other disciplines, and everyday experiences.

Descriptive Statement: Problem situations arise in many aspects of everyday life. Mathematics can be applied to describe problems as well as to solve them. Learning to apply problem-solving strategies at home, in the community and in school fosters students' independence and self-confidence.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Recognize, formulate, and solve mathematical problems arising from everyday experiences.
2. Apply mathematical problem solving strategies independently and with others.
3. Evaluate appropriateness of mathematical problem solutions.
4. Develop alternate mathematical problem-solving strategies if initially selected approaches do not work.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Five: Advanced Concepts and Communication

Math: Word Problems

Problem-Solving: Number Guess, Tic-Tac-Toe, Mystery Puzzles

Standard 4.5 - All students will regularly and routinely use calculators, computers, manipulatives, and other mathematical tools to enhance mathematical thinking, understanding and power.

Descriptive Statement: Calculators, computers and other mathematical tools allow students with a variety of needs to use mathematics in everyday activities. Students should explore technology and become proficient in the use of tools that can assist them in solving everyday life problems.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Use a variety of tools to measure objects or events (e.g., measuring behavior) in real life situations.
2. Use calculators, manipulatives, computers, and other tools to solve math problems in real life situations.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

All Stages:

Learners are gaining control over their access device and learning computer skills as they use the Stages Assessment Activities.

Stage Four: Early Concepts

Math Readiness: Counting: Learners use a number line to help solve mathematical problems.

Stage Five: Advanced Concepts and Communication

Math: Word Problems: Learners use a number line to help solve mathematical problems.

Standard 4.6 - All students will develop number sense and an ability to represent numbers in a variety of forms and use numbers in diverse situations.

Descriptive Statement: Numbers are used in a variety of ways in our daily lives. For example, numbers are used for identification, counting, and purchasing. Number sense means knowing what numbers represent and a common approach to using them. Students need to be able to identify important numbers in their personal lives and use numbers for everyday tasks.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Use whole numbers to count groups of objects within the context of everyday tasks.
2. Identify numbers of personal importance such as house number and phone number.
3. Recognize coins and dollars and their value.
4. Use money to make purchases.
5. Follow budgets developed based on personal needs.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Four: Early Concepts

Math Readiness: Number ID, Counting

Stage Five: Advanced Concepts and Communication

Math: Word Problems, Charts & Graphs, Fractions

Problem Solving: Number Guess

Stage Six: Functional Learning

Money Skills: Money Names, Money Equivalents, Counting Money

Standard 4.8 - All students will understand, select, and apply various methods of performing numerical operations.

Descriptive Statement: Students can apply various computational methods to perform mathematical operations including mental math, use of manipulatives, estimation, paper and pencil techniques and/or the use of calculators. Knowledge of how to apply some basic mathematical operations can assist students in solving problems in everyday life.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Use mathematical operations to solve problems in the context of everyday situations (e.g., shopping, banking).
2. Use estimation to solve problems in everyday life.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Four: Early Concepts

Math Readiness: Counting

Stage Five: Advanced Concepts and Communication

Math: Charts & Graphs, Math Facts, Word Problems, Fractions

Problem-Solving: Number Guess

Stage Six: Functional Learning

Money Skills: Money Names, Money Equivalents, Counting Money

Standard 4.9 - All students will develop an understanding of and will use measurement to describe and analyze phenomena.

Descriptive Statement: Measurement helps describe our world using numbers. We use numbers to describe simple things like length, weight, and temperature. Familiarity with common measurement units and a practical knowledge of measurement tools help students observe and understand the world around them. Knowledge of how to apply measurement techniques to everyday tasks can increase independence.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Use measures of length, distance, weight, quantity, time and temperature in the context of daily life activities.
2. Select and use appropriate standard and non-standard units of measurement in every day activities such as meal preparation, shopping, and banking.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Five: Advanced Concepts and Communication

Math: Geometry

Stage Six: Functional Learning

Money Skills: Money Names, Money Equivalents, Counting Money

Standard 4.11 - All students will develop an understanding of patterns, relationships, and functions and will use them to represent and explain real-world phenomena.

Descriptive Statement: Students should experience patterns in numbers, shapes and expressions. Students should use pattern-based thinking to understand and represent situations in everyday life. Understanding patterns can help solve problems and promote independence.

Cumulative Progress Indicators

1. Use pattern-based thinking to follow schedules and daily routines.
2. Generalize pattern-based thinking to new situations.

RELATED STAGES ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

Stage Four: Early Concepts

Math Readiness: Explore Patterns, Fill In/Continue Patterns, Create Patterns